



“Yours for life”

“To be a successful farmer, one must first know the nature of the soil.”

-Xenophon, 400BC

Fall 2013

NCACSP

We are currently accepting applications for the North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program (NCACSP). This program provides cost-share money, up to 75% reimbursement, for implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). These practices are intended to improve

water quality by addressing nonpoint source problems. Examples of BMPs covered under the ACSP include terraces, grassed waterways, livestock exclusion systems, livestock watering facilities, and many others.



Because of the excessive rainfall that we received earlier in the year, the Board has selected erosion control measures as a top priority. Any farmer or landowner seeking assistance is encouraged to stop by the office and apply.

No-till Drill Rental

The District has available for rent two 7' no-till drills. These drills require a 35 horsepower tractor with remote hydraulics and rent for \$8/acre. The fall is a perfect time for reseeding or establishing fescue pastures, grassed waterways, or establishing winter cover crops. The rental calendar is filling up fast, so if you are interested in renting a drill, please come by the office.



Nesting Boxes

As you probably know, Bluebirds nest in trees and logs that have been hollowed out by woodpeckers or through natural decay. Through logging and rural development, their natural habitat is becoming increasingly scarce. Providing suitable nesting boxes for the Bluebirds is one way to help increase their populations. The District has available for sale Bluebird nesting boxes for \$15/box. The box comes with instructions for mounting and information about nesting.

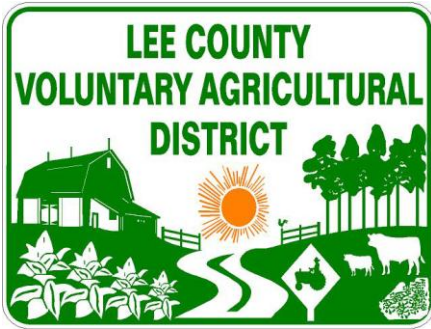


Through conservation practices, most notably the construction of Wood Duck Nesting boxes and conserving natural habitats for breeding, Wood Duck populations have slowly rebounded after serious decline in the late 19th Century. The Wood Duck is a year-round resident here in the South. Nesting boxes can be placed around, ponds, wooded swamps and creeks. The District has available for sale Wood Duck nesting boxes for \$45/box. The box comes with instructions for mounting and information about nesting.



VAD

In September 2008, Lee County Commissioners adopted an ordinance recognizing the importance of Agriculture in Lee County and thus created a Voluntary Agricultural District. The objectives of the VADs are to encourage the preservation of



farmland and natural resources and to provide the agricultural community a voice in land-use decisions within the county. The \$65 application fee provides the

landowner with a double-sided sign to be placed on the property to increase visibility of agriculture in the County and to show their individual interest in preserving agricultural lands.

In order to qualify, the farm must be currently participating in the present-use tax value program and follow approved conservation practices. To learn more about the VAD program, or to enroll your land, contact the Lee Soil and Water Office or the Lee County Cooperative Extension Office.

Cover Crops

By incorporating cover crops into your crop rotation, it's quite possible to improve soil health and function. The basic principle to building healthy soils is quite simple-stop tilling or minimize your tillage activities and start incorporating a diversity of crops, including winter cover crops, on your fields. Not only does maintaining winter cover crops feed beneficial soil microbes and earthworms, it also controls erosion, improves soil structure, and provides a mulch that reduces evaporation.

According to a recent study by the USDA, farmers who planted a winter cover crop saw a yield increase

of 9.6% in their corn crop and 11.6% yield increase in their soybean crop. These winter cover crops increase soil organic matter and thus the water holding capacity of the soil. "Improving soil health is a smart investment that will pay dividends on and off the farm for generations to come" (Baloun).

Information taken from "Get healthy soil by planting cover crops and rotating" by Don Baloun, NRCS State Conservationist, Minnesota.

RCW

The Lee Soil and Water Board sponsors high school students interested in attending the Resource Conservation Workshop (RCW), held at NC State University. This year, we were fortunate to have Layne Baker of Lee County High School participate. The RCW is a week long, hands-on workshop that exposes participants to many areas of conservation. Layne attended the August Board meeting to inform the Board of his experience while at the workshop and to thank them for their sponsorship. He said he really enjoyed the experience and would encourage others to attend.

New Staff

Mrs. Ann Billings, Administrative Assistance, left in July 2012 to take a job with Lee County Public Schools. We appreciate the hard-work and dedication put forth by Mrs. Billings. In September 2012, Mrs. Teresa Nicholson was hired on as the new Administrative Assistant and we look forward to working with her. Mr. Tommy Brooks, Soil Conservationist, recently retired after 33 years of dedicated service to Lee County. We appreciate all that he did for Lee County farmers and landowners and wish him well in his retirement. In May 2013, Ryan Faulk took his place as Soil Conservationist. This new team looks forward to working together in the coming years.

Current Board and Staff

Michael Gaster, Chairman (Elected)

Tony Ragan, Vice-Chair (Appointed)

David Dycus, Secretary/Treasurer (Appointed)

Tommy Dalrymple, Member (Elected)

John Gross, Member (Elected)

Teresa Nicholson, Administrative Assistant

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Ryan Faulk, Soil Conservationist

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Darryl Harrington, NRCS District Conservationist

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